National Transportation Safety Board
PRELIMINARY REPORT
AVIATION

NTSB ID: CEN13FA122 Most Critical Injury: Fatal

Occurrence Date: 01/02/2013 Investigated By: NTSB

Nearest City/PlaceStateZip CodeLocal TimeTime ZoneClear LakeIA504282057CST

Occurrence Type: Accident

Aircraft Information

Location/Time

Registration Number Aircraft Manufacturer Model/Series Number

N445MT Bell Helicopter 407

Type of Aircraft: Helicopter

Amateur Built Aircraft? No

Injury Summary:

Fatal

3

Serious

Minor

None

Revenue Sightseeing Flight: No Air Medical Transport Flight: Medical Emergency

Narrative

Brief narrative statement of facts, conditions and circumstances pertinent to the accident/incident:

*** Note: NTSB investigators either traveled in support of this investigation or conducted a significant amount of investigative work without any travel, and used data obtained from various sources to prepare this aircraft accident report. ***

On January 2, 2013, about 2057 central standard time, a Bell Helicopter model 407, N445MT, impacted terrain near Clear Lake, Iowa. The pilot and two medical crew members sustained fatal injuries. The helicopter was destroyed. The helicopter was registered to Suntrust Equipment Leasing & Finance Corporation and operated by Med-Trans Corporation under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 135 as a positioning flight. Night visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight, which was operated on a company flight plan. A flight plan was not filed with the Federal Aviation Administration. The flight originated from the Mercy Medical Center, Mason City, Iowa, about 2049, with an intended destination of the Palo Alto County Hospital, (IA76), Emmetsburg, Iowa.

A witness located about 1 mile south of the accident site, reported observing the helicopter as it approached from the east. He noted that it appeared to slow and then turn to the north. When he looked again, the helicopter appeared to descend straight down. He subsequently went back into his house and called 911. He described the weather conditions as "misty," with a light wind.

A second witness reported that he was working in his garage when he heard the helicopter. He stated that the sound of the helicopter changed as if it was turning, followed by what he described as a "thump" and then everything was quiet. He subsequently responded to the accident with the Ventura Fire Department. He reported that there was a coating of ice on his truck windshield that the wipers would not clear. He decided to drive another car to the fire station because it had been parked in the garage. While responding to the accident site with the fire department, as the fire truck he was on was waiting to cross Highway 18, they observed a Clear Lake police car, also responding to the accident, slide through the intersection. They informed dispatch to advise following units to expect slick road conditions. He noted that there was a haze in the air, which was evident when looking toward a street light; however, he did not recall any precipitation at the time.

A pilot located at the Mason City airport reported that he saw the helicopter fly overhead and estimated its altitude as 300 feet above ground level (agl). He was leaving the airport at that time and noted there was a glaze of ice on his car. He added that the roads were icy as he drove out of the airport and onto Highway 18. He commented that he had flown into Mason City about 1830 and encountered some light rime ice at that time.

Satellite tracking data depicted the helicopter becoming airborne at the medical center about 2049. According to the data, between 2050 and 2055, the helicopter proceeded westbound along Highway 18 about 1,800 feet mean sea level (msl). The final tracking data point was recorded about 2056 and

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Narrative (Continued)

was located approximately 1 mile north of Highway 18, along Balsam Avenue. The altitude associated with that data point was 2,648 feet msl. The accident site was located about one-quarter mile west of the final data point.

The helicopter impacted a harvested agricultural field. The debris path was about 100 feet long and oriented toward the west-southwest. The helicopter was fragmented, and the cockpit and cabin areas were compromised. The main wreckage consisted of the main rotor blades, transmission, engine, portions of the fuselage, and the tail boom. The tail rotor had separated from the tail boom and was located about 80 feet east-northeast of the main wreckage. The landing skids had separated from the fuselage. The left skid was located at the initial impact point; the right skid was located about 35 feet west of the main wreckage.

The pilot held an airline transport pilot certificate with helicopter and single-engine airplane ratings. His airplane rating was limited to private pilot privileges. He was issued a second class airman medical certificate on April 17, 2012, with a limitation for corrective lenses. His most recent regulatory checkride was completed on September 29, 2012, about the time of his initial employment with the operator. At that time, he reported having accumulated a total flight time of 2,808 hours, with 2,720 hours in helicopters.

Weather conditions recorded at the Mason City Municipal Airport, located about 7 miles east of the accident site, at 2053, were: wind from 300 degrees at 8 knots; 8 miles visibility; broken clouds at 1,700 feet agl, overcast clouds at 3,300 feet agl, temperature -3 degrees Celsius, dew point -5 degrees Celsius, altimeter 30.05 inches of mercury. At 2117, the recorded conditions included broken clouds at 1,300 feet agl and overcast clouds at 1,800 feet agl.

Updated on Jan 16 2013 10:29AM

TRANSO
National Transportation Safety Board
PRELIMINARY REPORT
ÁVIATION

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PRELIMINARY REPORT AVIATION			Occurrence Date: 01/02/2013									
			Occurrence Type: Accident									
Other Aircraft Involved												
Registration Number Aircraft Manufacturer						Model/Series Number						
Acciden	Accident Information											
Aircraft Damage: Destroyed Accide					ent Occurred During:							
Crew	Name					Certificate No.			Injury			
Pilot	On File				Or	On File			Fatal			
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
Operator Information												
Name Operator D Med-Trans Corporation M3XA					Desig	Designator Code Doing Busines Mercy Air						
Street Address C 4581 S Butterfield Drive Tu					y scon					State AZ	Zip Code 85714	
-Type of Certificate(s) Held:												
Air Carrier Operating Certificate(s): On-demand Air Taxi												
Operating Certificate: Operator Certificate:												
Regulation Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation												
Type of F	light Operations Conduc	ted: Positioning										
Flight P	lan/Itinerary											
Type of Flight Plan Filed: Company VFR												
Last Departure Point						State Airport Identifi						
Mason City						IA						
Destination						State	Airport	dentifier				
Emmetsburg						IA	IA76					
Weather Information												
Investigat	Facil	ity ID: MCW	Observation Time (Local): 2053									
Sky/Lowe	est Cloud Condition:		Ft. A									
Lowest Ceiling: Broken 1700 Ft. AGL				V	isibility:	SM	Altim	neter:	30.05	"Hg		
PRELIMINARY INFORMATION - SUBJECT TO CHANGE												

National Transportation Safety Board PRELIMINARY REPORT

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Occurrence Date: 01/02/2013

TREETING			Occurrence Bate. 01/02/2013						
AVIATION				Occurrence Type: Accident					
Weather Information (Continued from page 2)									
Temperature: -3 °C	De	ew Point: -	.5°C	Wind D	irection: 300				
Wind Speed: 8	s.	Gusts: K	its.	Weather Conditions at Accident Site: Visual Co				nditions	
Administration Data									
Notification From			Date						
NTSB Comm Ctr / Clear Lake FD									
FAA District Office/Coordinator FAA Des Moines Flight Standards Jeffrey Rock					Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) Timothy Sorensen				